

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are all the claims pending in the application. By this amendment, Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to define more clearly the claimed invention. It is believed and intended that no new matter has been added by this amendment. Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-10, 13, 14, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,612,100 to Morimoto et al. (hereafter “Morimoto”). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

A method and apparatus consistent with the present invention relate to a sheet package producing system for producing a sheet package having a predetermined number of sheets. The sheet package producing system includes cutting/stacking means, covered sheet stack producing means, and packaging means. The cutting/stacking means forms the sheets by cutting a continuous sheet at a regular length, and for stacking only the sheets in the predetermined number. The covered sheet stack producing means folds a protective cover around at least a portion of the stacked sheets, to obtain a covered sheet stack. The packaging means packages the covered sheet stack to obtain said sheet package. The cutting/stacking means, covered sheet stack producing means, and packaging means are connected in series with one another. The covered sheet stack producing means includes a first handling means for placing one of the protective cover and the stacked sheets on an upper surface of the other of the protective cover

and the stacked sheets, and a folding means for folding said protective cover. *See* specification pages 4-5 and Figs. 1-7 of the present application.

Morimoto discloses pre-folded protective covers 12, with films F stacked on a top panel 16 of the protective cover 12. After the films F are stacked on the top panel 16, a bottom panel 14 of the protective cover 12 is folded over the uppermost film F of the film stack, and side panels 21, 23 of the protective cover 12 are brought into engagement with each other, producing a pack 26. A protective cover pre-folding apparatus 200 (*see* Fig. 2) folds the protective cover 12 along first, second, third, and fourth fold lines 18, 20, 22, 24. *See* Figs. 1-9 of Morimoto and the associated text, e.g., col. 7, lines 33-56, col. 8 lines 20-61 and col. 9, lines 16-28.

Morimoto does not disclose a cutting/stacking means which forms the sheets by cutting a continuous sheet at a regular length, and which stacks only the sheets in the predetermined number, as presently claimed. In addition, Morimoto does not disclose includes a first handling means for placing one of the protective cover and the stacked sheets on an upper surface of the other of the protective cover and the stacked sheets, as presently claimed. In Morimoto, the protective cover is placed upon the folding means and the cut sheets are stacked successively on top of the protective cover. Therefore, Morimoto does not disclose all of the presently claimed elements and the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claims 2, 4-10, 13, 14, 16, and 17 each depend upon one of Claims 1 and 3 and are patentable at least for the reasons set forth above based on this dependency as well as the recitation set forth therein. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-10, 13, 14, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,733,099 to Honneger. Claims 11 and 12 each depend upon Claim 3 and are patentable at least for the reasons set forth above based upon this dependency as well as the recitations set forth therein. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

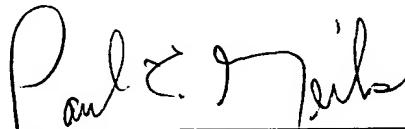
The Examiner rejected Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morimoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,878,554 to Loree et al. Claim 15 depends upon Claim 3 and is patentable at least for the reasons set forth above based upon this dependency as well as the recitations set forth therein. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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